

# UT commencement speakers offer graduates advice for work, life

At commencement events around the country, college graduates are getting more than just their diplomas; they're receiving inspiration and bits of advice from the speakers at their ceremonies.

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, graduates heard from fellow students, alumni, and industry and academic leaders, including three speakers who received honorary degrees—Apollo 17 astronaut Harrison Schmitt; Tennessee's 48th governor, Phil Bredesen; and HGTV founder Ken Lowe.

Here are some words of wisdom UT commencement speakers shared with grads:

Harrison Schmitt, astronaut, former U.S. senator (honorary degree recipient): "My time with the Apollo program taught me that when Americans do great things, we rely on young Americans. The average age of the 450,000 designers, engineers, workers and scientists that enabled Neil Armstrong to be

the first man on the moon in 1969, and me to be the 12th such man, was about 25. . . . As America moves forward toward a future on the moon and Mars, as many thoughtful Americans think it should, it will be your generation that creates that future. It will be your generation that leads the way."

Ken Lowe, chairman of the board, president and CEO of Scripps Networks Interactive (honorary degree recipient): "You know, social media's a wonderful thing. It's changed our lives forever. I appreciate a good tweet as well as the next guy. But I think it's good now and then to turn off the iPhone, or Galaxy, or whatever you use, and have a real conversation with another human being; and then listen. You might be surprised by what you learn."

Phil Bredesen, former governor of Tennessee (honorary degree recipient): "The first draft of anything is usually way off. Writers know this. Over the years, I've observed that

the most successful people don't get hung up on trying to get everything right the first time. That paralyzes you. The trick of most successful people instead is to act—get that first draft of whatever you are trying to do down, recognizing that it won't be right. And then you edit, revise, strike out what's not working, and make the next draft better, then keep repeating that throughout your life."

Paulette Brown, immediate past president of the American Bar Association: "Our nation's history of racial inequality, economic injustice and the mistreatment of anyone who is considered as 'other' has contributed to a huge imbalance in our legal system. . . . We have a unique responsibility to the profession to ensure respect for the rule of law for everyone. That can only happen when the public believes that our justice system works fairly, impartially and without favor. Know and understand on a daily basis your law license is more than just

a fancy piece of paper. It gives you enormous power to do good."

Darris Upton, College of Social Work graduate and president of the Bachelor of Social Work Organization: "When the fires swept through the Smoky Mountains and brought terrible tragedy to our friends and neighbors in Gatlinburg, here we were—a bunch of students, at the end of a semester, trying to take final exams, finish projects, turn in papers, and even trying to make plans to get home for the holidays. But we stopped. The smoke was still rising and the ground was still hot when the stu-

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